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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS REJECT APRIL 21 PRESIDENTIAL
AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

SUMMARY

¶1. Begin summary: The Domestic Election Observation Group, a coalition of civil society organizations in Nigeria, has rejected and called for the cancellation of the April 21 Nigeria presidential and national assembly elections. At a press conference in Abuja, the group described the elections as a charade and alleged the conduct did not meet minimum democratic standards. The group averred that the electoral body, INEC, and indeed the Nigerian government had failed in its responsibility to conduct free, fair and credible elections. While emphasizing that any outcome of that election could not represent the wishes of the people, the group cautioned that problems arising from the elections should be resolved through legal and political means without recourse to violence. The group urged the National Assembly to reconvene immediately to find a constitutional solution to the election crisis, adding that any acceptable arrangement must include the conduct of fresh elections within a three-month period. The group also called on the international community not to recognize the elections or any government that may emerge from the process. End summary.

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OBSERVATIONS BY THE GROUP ON APRIL 21 ELECTIONS
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¶2. The group said in many states of the federation, elections did not take place due to late arrival, hoarding and eventual diversion of election materials; voter intimidation and ballot box stuffing. They reported inaccuracy of election materials as there were mix ups in names and photographs of candidates as well as logos of political parties. They alleged that INEC officials and security operatives were greatly compromised and seemed to work for the ruling party, the PDP. The group also observed very low voter turn out, presumably due to the conduct and outcome of the April 14 governorship elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

¶3. In addition for a call for the cancellation of the elections, the group called for the immediate dissolution of INEC as currently constituted; an inquiry into the award of contracts relation to

various aspects of the elections with special emphasis on how INEC used the substantial state allocations; and an inquiry into the financial transactions of Professor Maurice Iwu, the Commission's chairman. The group also recommended as a long term measure an amendment to the 1999 Constitution to guarantee the independence of INEC to ensure it is non-partisan.

¶4. The group disclosed there would be a civil society summit on April 25, 2007 to work out strategies for mobilizing Nigerians for non-violent demonstrations and civil disobedience to protest the conduct of the 2007 general elections.

CAMPBELL